Middle Columbia River Steelhead Recovery

Federal Caucus Focus Team Report Presentation

September 18, 2018

Focus Team Members

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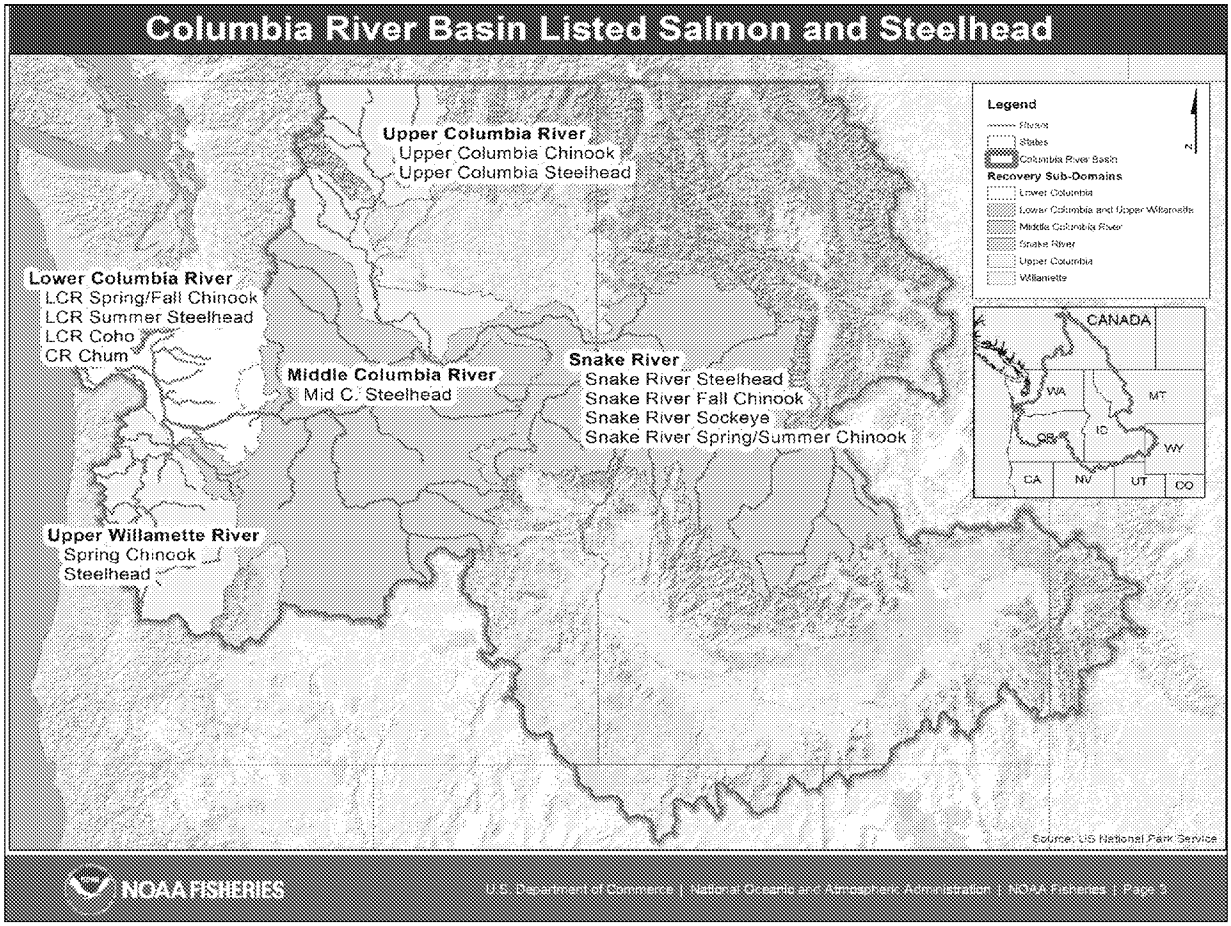
• Rob Huff	BLM
• Keith Hatch	BIA
• John Palmer	EPA
• Tom Cooney	NMFS
• Rosemary Furfey	NMFS
• Michelle Helms	BPA



Thirteen species of salmon and steelhead listed in the Basin.

In order to take an ecosystem approach and also to address multiple species, NOAA organized recovery planning into recovery domains. Shown here.

Middle Columbia River steelhead DPS chosen as Federal Caucus focus species for this FY 2018 project.

What We Learned

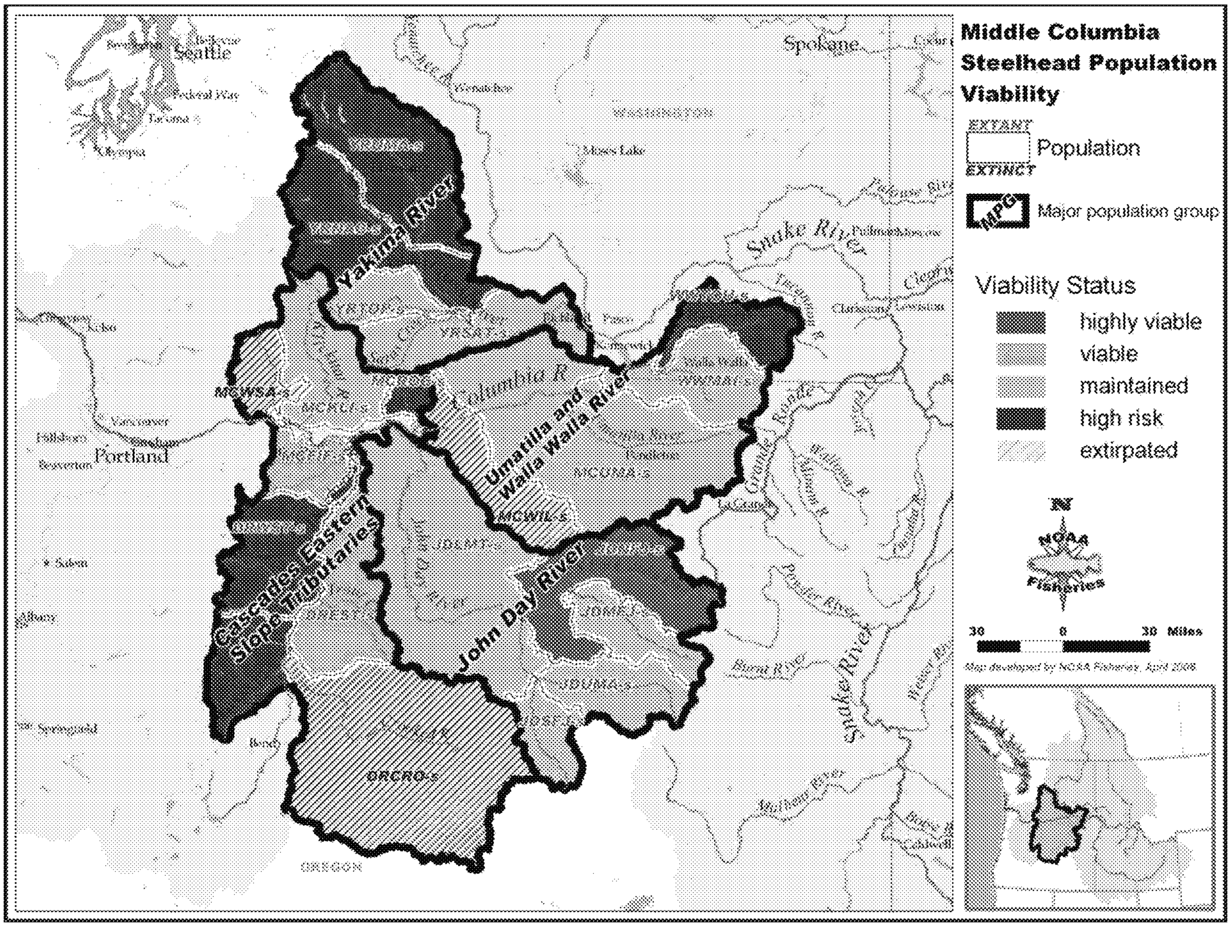
- Federal agencies have implemented projects that have benefited Middle Columbia River (MCR) steelhead viability
- MCR steelhead are doing relatively well compared to other Columbia River species
- Yes, we identified a handful of specific, well targeted actions to provide substantial improvements to MCR steelhead viability

Team Purpose

- Focusing on MCR steelhead, use current recovery information to identify important limiting factors and threats
- Identify whether actions taken by federal agencies can improve MCR viability
- Identify federal action accomplishments
- Identify future federal actions to improve viability

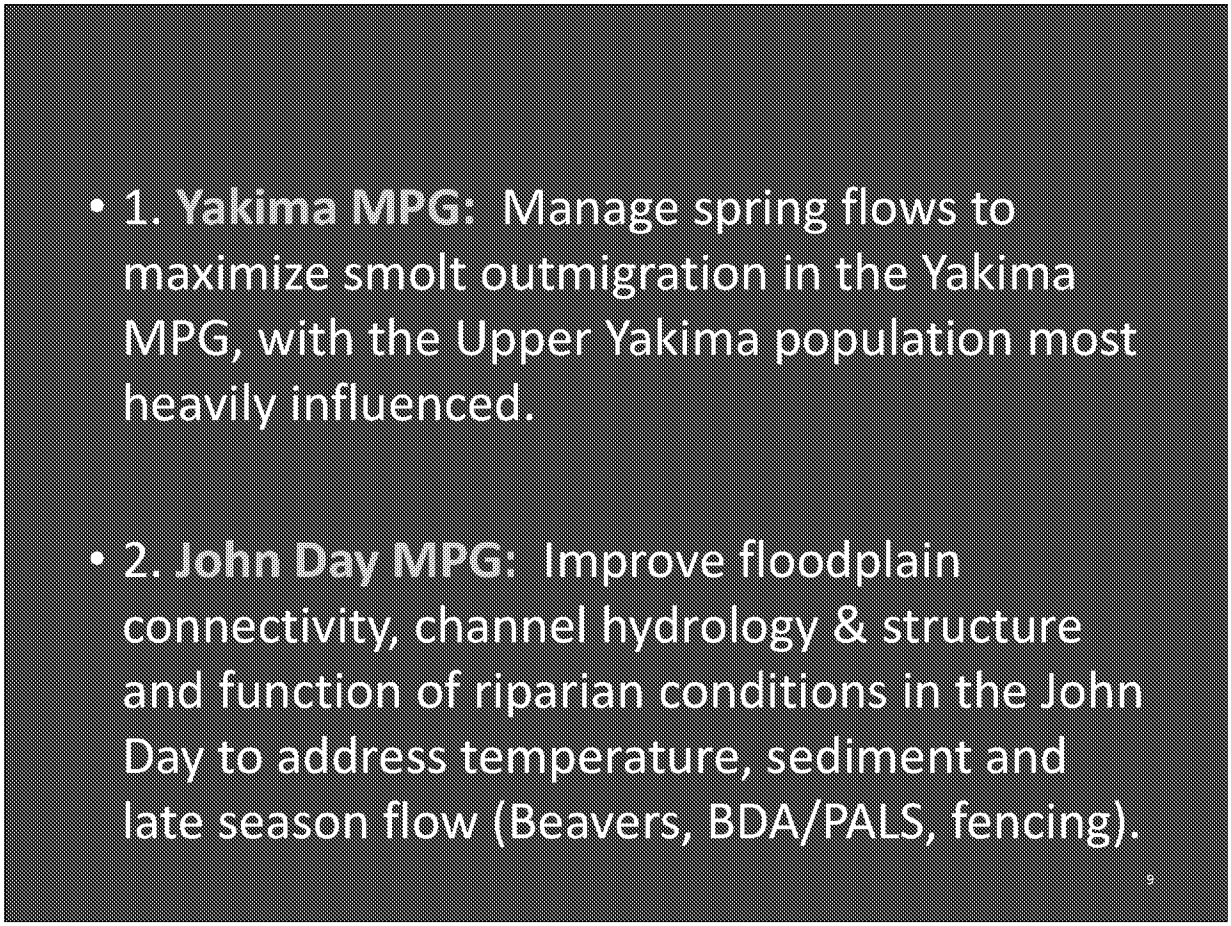
Work Plan Tasks

- Form interagency Focus Team and meet regularly to carry out work plan
- NMFS and Science Center conduct briefings for Focus Team on current status and recovery plan
- Conduct workshop with MCR Steelhead Steering Committee in The Dalles on March 29, 2018
- Identify federal actions completed
- Identify potential future actions and overarching factors
- Produce recovery story



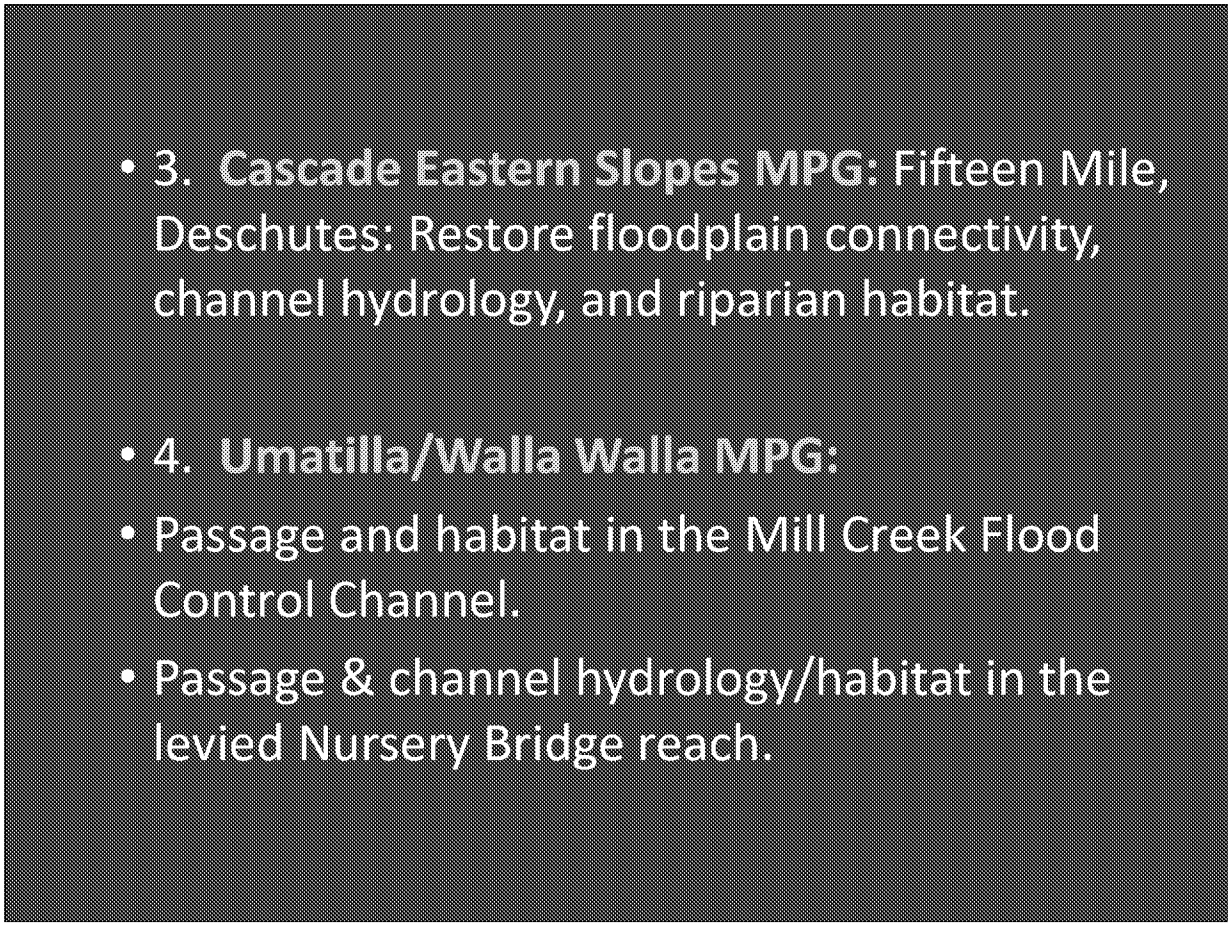
Middle Columbia Steelhead Population Viability
EXTANT
Population
EXTINCT
MPG
Major population group
Viability Status
highly viable
viable
maintained
high risk
extirpated
N
NOAA Fisheries
30 0 30 Miles
Map developed by NOAA Fisheries, April 2006
Yakima River
Umatilla and Walla Walla River
John Day River
Cascades Eastern Slope Tributaries
Columbia R
Snake River
Spokane
Seattle
Federal Way
Tacoma
Olympia
WASHINGTON
Moses Lake
Wenatchee
Pasco
Clarkston
Lewiston
Walla Walla
Pendleton
La Grande
Vancouver
Hillsboro
Beaverton
Portland
Salem
Albany
Springfield
Bend
OREGON
Powder River
Burnt River
Malheur River
Grande Ronde
Palouse River
YRTOP-s
YRSAT-s
MCWSA-s
MCKLI-s
WWMAI-s
MCUMA-s
MCWIL-s
JDMET-s
JDUMA-s
ORCRO-s

When the Columbia Basin Branch was asked to participate in this effort we agreed, with one condition. While there is still a lengthy laundry list of restoration actions that can and should be taken to improve the viability of MCR steelhead – we want to use this effort as an opportunity to focus on only a few actions that require a significant degree of participation by one or more Federal agencies and NMFS believes will result in a substantial improvement in MCR steelhead viability.



Smolt outmigration is seriously affected by hydro operations in the Yakima basin. Recent studies have indicated high mortality rates for juvenile smolts in the reach downstream of Roza Dam and farther down the river in the Chandler and lower river areas. Competing uses for the water during this time period should be secondary to ESA requirements. Primary Federal agencies are BOR and BPA

Water quantity and quality in the John Day basin is severely limiting juvenile rearing habitat. Channel structure, riparian structure and function and floodplain connectivity would all help to improve temperatures, low flows, and instream habitat – NMFS believes that fencing to continue/support grazing while protecting riparian areas would make a significant difference. Primary Federal agencies are USFS and BLM – however ALL Federal agencies could assist with providing funds for fencing and replanting.



Again, protection and restoration of riparian areas and restoration of flood plain access can assist with several habitat conditions. This basin does not have a major Federal presence that can be the lead for these actions.

Passage and habitat in Mill Creek and the Walla Walla River at the MCFCP and Nursery Bridge – levees, weirs and drop structures

Overarching Factors: Why are they important?

- **Past –** Federal Caucus has focused on Four H's in BiOp implementation and recovery planning
- **Present** – Benefits from restoration accomplishments could be masked or diminished by these overarching factors
- **Future** – Consideration of the known and/or predicted effects of overarching factors should inform decision making by managers on the future siting and prioritization of restoration projects

Near-term Overarching Factors: What are they?

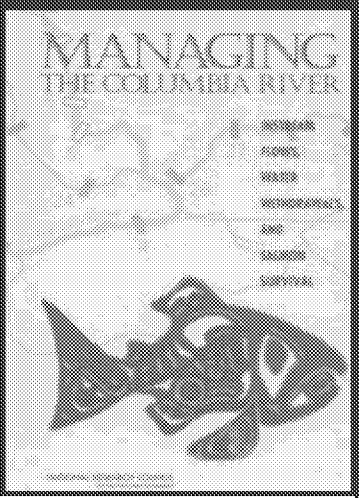
Within Basin Effects:

- Predation: Mammalian and Avian Species – NMFS, USFWS, ACOE
- Tributary Overshoot – NMFS, States, Tribes

Overarching Factors: What are they?

Out of Basin: Landscape Stressors

- Climate Change
  - 2013 PNW Climate Impacts Group-
    (+4.3°F to +5.8 by 2050s)
- Flows (i.e. Fish Flows)
  - Treaty Negotiations = some evaluation.
  - National Academy of Sciences- 2004.
    (Flows matter; 1-6% more mainstem withdrawal, too much in low years.)



- Temperature
  -Mainstem and several major tributaries regularly too hot

OREGON ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS

The Oregonian

Hot water kills half of Columbia River sockeye salmon

Updated Jul 27, 2015; Posted Jul 27, 2015

Long-term Overarching Factors: What are they?

Out of Basin Effects: Landscape Scale Stressors

- Aquatic Invasive and Non-Native Species – 100th Meridian Columbia River Basin Team, State Partners
- Contaminants and Foodwebs – Columbia River Toxics Reduction Working Group
- Monitoring – PNAMP, BPA-NMFS-NWPCC initiative

14

NOTES:

Monitoring supports assessment of the benefits of restoration activities and the impacts of overarching topics on fish populations and their habitats.

Three years for framework? Suggest six months for framework, three eyars for full implementation in the field

Overarching Factors: How do we address them?

- **Phase I Near-term: Collaborate and coordinate on restoration and recovery projects and actions**

- Design, develop and implement a sustainable and consistent approach to monitoring of fish populations and their habitats

- Implement priority projects recommended in this report, through collective action and individual agency leadership

Overarching Factors: How do we address them?

- **Phase II Long-term: Collaborate on programmatic scale**
- Align shared management objectives of agencies for long term topics (e.g. water issues) to support near term topics (fish), e.g., reservoir level management to reduce bass and walleye spawning success
- Facilitate discussions with members of the Caucus: i.e., action agencies, land management agencies, and regulatory agencies
- Seek guidance and support from other federal, state, and tribal entities addressing the overarching factors

16

Northwest Climate Science Center – Funding for "actionable science" projects

Great Northern Landscape Conservation Cooperative – status unknown, restart?

Discussion

- What are the most important lessons learned from this report?
- For your agency, what information in this report is most useful to you?
- What topics or recommendations are of most interest to the Caucus, or individual agencies?
- Of the many recommendations, which one(s) does the Caucus want to act on – either as individual agencies, or collectively as the Caucus?
- What next steps do you recommend?

17

Cautionary note: Several existing groups been identified as doing work relevant to our goals, such as the 100th Meridian Columbia River Basin Team and the Columbia River Toxics Reduction Working Group. However, their efforts can only be brought to bear on our objectives if they are:

Adequately staffed with representatives from each Federal Caucus agency

Those representatives are engaging their Federal Caucus members in the respective issues